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The Coming Reaction.

For two years past we have lived in a war atmosphere. The evil effects of this atmosphere have been extensively felt, not only in this country and Great Britain, but throughout the world. An incalculable amount of mischief has been wrought, both materially and morally. Irreparable wrongs have been done. The appetite for exciting horrors has been wofully stimulated, so that the most frightful disasters have had but an inadequate satisfying power. False ideas and destructive sentiments have been reëngendered. Political ideals have been debased. New schemes of ambition have been heated into life. Political conditions have been created, the direful effects of which will last after all the men now living are dead. Breathing the poisonous air, one has been tempted to ask whether war will not really be eternal and the atmosphere always be full of strife and death.

But, after all, our civilization, imperfect as it is, soon tires of war, even to the point of disgust. It is too intelligent, too ethical, too sensitive, to be long imposed on by anything so opposed to all its interests and refinements as the ghastly and expensive business of human butchery. Neither the Philippine conflict nor the fratricidal South African War could by any possibility be re-inaugurated to-day, nor even the war with Spain. Many of the men who helped to bring them on are at heart the sickest of them.

However jauntily war is entered into, its speedy disasters, horrors and sorrows soon have a sobering effect. Daily reports of men killed by twos and threes, or in large numbers, of the excesses and inhumanities almost constantly committed, of hospitals crowded with the sick and dying, the return of men maimed and broken down for life, the wreck of homes, the piling up of expenses and taxes, make a very different impression from the gaiety, excitement and "patriotic" fanfaronade of the opening days.

In former times people cared very little for the

ruin and the moral degradation wrought by war. Butchery and licentiousness seemed the natural thing. Animal delight in crushing others was the ruling passion. But in our day no revival of the brute in men can destroy or even suppress, except temporarily, the power of the civilized conscience and the civilized feelings. Individuals may, and do, still go to the bottom of brutality, but society as a whole no longer can. There is too much of the new leaven of humanity in it. Men recover their senses, their moral balance, more quickly than formerly, and discover more easily what fools they have made of themselves, or allowed others to make of them. Under these conditions, a war must give a prompt account of itself or go quickly out of favor. It cannot hold up long under the free inspection and criticism of the civilized intelligence and conscience. We have here a social fact on which we may keep our hope alive and strong even during darkest months, like those through which we have recently been forced to go. The darkness is sure to pass and the light to shine more brightly than before.

After the painful experiences not yet wholly passed, we may expect, therefore, a great reaction. That reaction has already set in strongly. The tremendous anti-war protest which has developed all over the civilized world has not been lost,—not a breath of it. With it have coöperated the fiery-red lessons of the battlefield and the loathsome ones of the camp and the hospital,—lessons which can neither be cried down nor thought down. The English people have grown very tired of the war in South Africa. It has been a costly and bitter lesson to them. At heart they have felt deeply the humiliation of it. They will be glad to be done with it. Their condemnation of it is sure, in a short time, to go beyond that passed upon the Crimean War. The reaction in this country against the craze which carried the people away is already clearly perceptible. The imperialistic spirit is dying down in those sections where it was strongest. Those who were dazed into silence are recovering their voices and beginning to speak.

The principles of peace will soon be in respect again, probably as never before. The work of the Hague Conference will be studied, understood and appreciated. The permanent court of arbitration,

the members of which are now being appointed, will be lauded to the skies, and will be the rallying point of all the best thought, sentiment and activity in international affairs.

The friends of the new international order, who have so bravely stood by their cause in the time of adversity, must be quick to take advantage of the turn in the tide. They cannot hope to undo, except in small part, the mischief which has been done. But if they are wise in their time and faithful in their new opportunity, any recurrence of the painful experiences of the recent past ought to be made forever impossible in the future. Civilization must be no longer allowed to degrade and disgrace itself. A new campaign of education ought to be begun at once, every man doing his utmost service in the field about him. To wait, as many friends of peace have done, until a war is about to break out, and then expect by spasmodic efforts to prevent it, is to commit a fatal mistake.

In the months immediately following wars — particularly if they be, in the view of many, senseless and wicked wars — public sentiment is always sensitive and open to appeals in behalf of international goodwill, justice and peace. We believe that this will be the case in the future just before us. It will be our opportunity. We must, with God's help, use it to secure such a union of the nations around the Hague court and in a bond of mutual treaties of arbitration, as recommended by the recent Mohonk Conference, as will set up a practically impassable barrier against war hereafter. War has again in multiplied ways proved itself the cruelest, most dangerous and most degrading of human institutions. The events of the past two years have put into our hands weapons of great effectiveness with which to smite the evil against which we are contending, if we are only wise and courageous to use them in a proper way. "Now is the appointed time."

History of the Peace Congresses.

The approach of the Peace Congress, to be held in Paris the first week in October, naturally raises inquiry about previous peace congresses.

The first General Peace Congress was held in London, in June, 1843, just after the great Antislavery Convention. It was attended by 337 delegates, 294 of whom were from Great Britain, 37 from America, and 6 from the continent of Europe. The last session, held in Exeter Hall, was attended by two thousand people. The Congress was presided over by Charles Hindley, M. P., and had many distinguished men in its membership, among whom were a considerable number of members of Parliament, Richard Cobden and others. Among the delegates from this country were Dr. George C. Beckwith, Prof. Amasa Walker, Rev. Joshua Leavitt, Lewis Tappan,

John Tappan, Rev. A. A. Phelps, Dr. Robert Baird and Mr. Arnold Buffum. The Convention adopted an address to all governments of the civilized world. This was presented to the British government, then headed by Sir Robert Peel, by a strong deputation, of which the Marquis de la Rochefoucauld was the chairman. It was also presented by a deputation to the King of Belgium, then on a visit to London. The London press, including even that prince of sneerers, the *Times*, gave large space to the work of the Convention.

The second General Peace Congress was held at Brussels in September, 1848. Elihu Burritt of the American Peace Society, coöperated with by the London Peace Society, was the moving spirit in the organization of the Congress. It was the intention to hold the Congress in Paris, but the disturbed condition of public affairs in France prevented. The Brussels Congress was presided over by Mr. Visschers, one of the most distinguished members of the Belgian government, and, though it had been looked forward to with some anxiety, proved a great success. Very able papers were presented and addresses made, by Mr. Edmund Fry of England, Mr. Francisque Bouvet of the French Assembly, Baron de Reiffenberg of the Belgian Royal Academy, Mr. William Ewart, M. P., Mr. J. S. Buckingham, Henry Richard, W. Stokes, Professor Roussel of the University of Brussels, Ramon de la Sagra of Madrid, Joseph Sturge, Elihu Burritt, Mr. Bertinatti of Turin, Henry Vincent of London, Henry Clapp of Cincinnati, L'Abbé Louis of Belgium, Mr. Roberts, President of the Republic of Liberia and others. The principal subjects of discussion were the Iniquity of War, Arbitration, a Congress of Nations and Disarmament. About 300 delegates attended the Congress, 130 of whom were from Great Britain, 2 from the United States, and the rest from various countries of Europe.

In August, 1849, the third International Peace Congress was held in Paris. This was in some respects the most remarkable peace congress ever held. The movement was then in its first enthusiasm. Richard Cobden had brought forward in the House of Commons, for the first time, a motion in favor of arbitration, which had been supported by public meetings all over England, and received 81 votes. Many of the leading men of France were hearty supporters of the movement, — Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Emile de Girardin, Horace Say, Frederic Bastiat, Athanase Coquerel, the Abbé Deguerry, etc. From the United States 23 delegates were present, 19 from Belgium, 100 from France, a number from Germany, Italy and Switzerland, and more than 300 from Great Britain, with a still larger number of British visitors. The moving spirits in organizing the Congress were Elihu Burritt and Henry Richard. Victor Hugo was president, and made a most remarkable address, from which quotation has been made